

escape from gravity

Irregular bulletin of the Association of Autonomous Astronauts

No.7

S P E C I A L S P A C E 1 9 9 9 I S S U E

SPACE TRAVEL BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!

In April 1998, proceedings at the Bologna Intergalactic Conference had initiated the fourth phase to the AAA's Five Year Plan. This period of CONSOLIDATION was intended as an opportunity for Autonomous Astronauts to assess the achievements that they had already made in destroying the state, corporate and military monopoly of space travel, and to prepare themselves for the fifth and final phase to the AAA's Five Year Plan for establishing, by the year 2000, a world-wide network of local, community-based AAA groups.

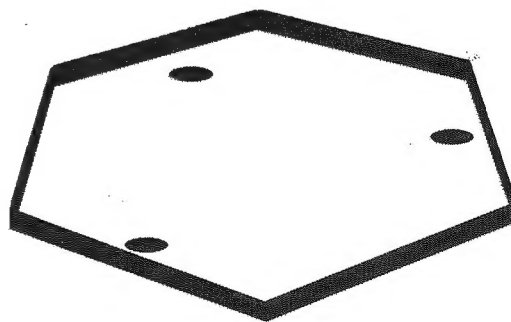
This fifth and final phase was announced on April 23rd 1999. This phase is the AAA's FINAL PUSH, during which Autonomous Astronauts around the world carry out their concluding activities, including media invasions, recruitment drives and propaganda efforts, in preparation for the AAA's dissolution.

One of the notable successes of the consolidation phase was an AAA training session held at the Oceania AAA launch site on One Tree Hill in South London in October 1998. This included a vigorous game of three-sided football and a highly effective astral projection group exercise. The session was attended by a range of AAA and non-AAA individuals, and all the teams in the three-sided football match included children of varying ages. A half-time picnic was also organised, and the event demonstrated that the AAA has now evolved into a social movement that attracts people of all ages and backgrounds.

Meanwhile, Inner City AAA continue to push their ideas forward. We have recently completed a design for an AAA Krazy Golf hole that features in the Broomhill Literary Festival, North Devon, May 21-23 1999. This six foot wide, hexagonal-shaped golf hole, with three holes and requiring three players, with a six-inch high rubberised wall along its sides, is the first attempt to

apply three-sided game concepts to the sport of golf. It will be used to illustrate the importance of three-sided thinking and practise to the AAA project.

In June 1999 the AAA present 'Space 1999', a ten day festival of independent and community-based space exploration, that takes place in various venues across London. The festival includes an Intergalactic Conference, film and video presentations and a special pub night with debates on the important space exploration issues, lunch-time pickets, gatherings and demonstrations against the state, corporate and military monopoly of space travel, AAA training sessions and tours of AAA launch sites throughout London, games of three-sided football and the first ever 'Three-Sided Football Intergalactic Cup Final', an all-night party and rave in space as well as various music events, and an exhibition of AAA propaganda and printed matter. 'Space 1999' will be a momentous occasion for independent, community-based space travel and the struggle against the state, corporate and military monopoly of space exploration.



above: AAA Three-sided Krazy Golf Hole, including six inch high rubberised wall. Three players all play at the same time, attempting to knock their ball down an opposing hole. Golf clubs can be used to block holes.

The Apocalypse Rehearsal

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."

Revelations

"Some day, an urn full of ashes will be thrown out of the sky, and it will burn the land and boil the ocean".

Hopi Prophecy

On the 18th of August 1999 the US space probe Cassini is scheduled to approach the Earth at a velocity of 46,000 miles per hour, for a so-called "earth flyby", in order to increase its speed en route to Saturn. This will be a rehearsal for the Apocalypse.

The fact is, the slightest accidental loss of control could result in the Cassini's re-entry into our atmosphere, where the probe would burn up along with the 72 pounds of radioactive Plutonium (P-238) it contains on board. It could be the tenth and most serious nuclear accident to happen in space since 1963, when — in similar circumstances — the probe SNAP 9A fell down into the atmosphere together with a kilogramme of Plutonium.

Since 1997, and unbeknown to a wider public, a small group of scientists, researchers, doctors, engineers and social activists have been appealing to various world institutions to make NASA redirect this probe. NASA, months before the launch of Cassini, ignored a critical report by the National Academy of Sciences. So watch out — this is not a gang of radical dissidents, but the most important official research institution in the United States of America, ignored by NASA!

The Cassini Redirect Coalition estimates that if the Cassini does fall to Earth the result could be millions of cancer deaths within the next decade. You can find these predictions, along with more information, on their website (www.nonviolence.org/noflyby).

There is a Chernobyl in space waiting to happen.

Whatever happens, the Cassini alert has a significant value for us. We can use it to enlarge our view of the general dynamics of what is happening on (and off) the planet.

Above our heads, shadowed by astronautical and technological hype, the enclosure and rationalization of space, which began in 1957, is continuing, according to the clever strategy of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The recent orbital trip of the 77 year old John Glenn was a sign that capitalist command is now to be located in the stratosphere.

Critical Art Ensemble have written:

"Apocalypse and utopia have imploded with such force under the sign of technology that it is nearly impossible to separate the two possibilities. The media machine of the corporate complex maintains a utopian spectacle to keep the population moving toward existence as cyborgs."

When the thrust of commodity-utopia fades, and the machine is on the verge of breaking up, then a special catastrophe, a state of emergency, a small apocalypse is needed to announce the creation of a new — and more effective — order.

The three main cycles of space conquest have similarities with this dynamic: from a heroic phase, to moon utopia, towards the Apollo 13 apocalypse; the end of a cycle and back again; civil reconversion, SRI warfare utopia, Challenger apocalypse; back again; a new phase of biotechnological implementation, the Mars terraforming utopia, and towards a new apocalypse... but which one? It's the same old tale.

Propaganda is disguised as disclosure. More and more spectacular fake discoveries and more and more useless technologies. 'Science' (once expected to be neutral and 'humanitarian') has revealed its

true identity — and it looks like ideology. Knowledge has become the prey of multinational monopolies.

Even the neo-conservative theorist Furio Colombo warns us about disinformation.

"A particular question is the credibility of a source. This happened in the USA with the "star wars" issue: a bunch of hyper-expensive space warfare technologies which were to be used as an unbeatable defense shield. The hard debate between supporters and opposers never looked at the real facts. When the cold war came to an end, it was finally revealed that most of the facts were just conjecture, a fraud to foster fear in the enemy. But this also worked with the American press, the reporters and opinion-makers, too."

If we read the space epic as a literary text, we find the use of 'simulated motivation', a narrative device well known to the readers of detective novels. Events and clues are continuously introduced to divert attention from the real situation. You can only unmask the fraud at the end, when all these elements reveal their true nature — fake issues spread to allow a plot to develop.

The rhetoric of the "giant leap" is black propaganda in action, a sophisticated cover-up that hides the social relationships reproduced by these useless space programmes.

We should set about creating a widespread campaign of debunking these state and corporate space agencies. It does not take hard work to discover that the European and American state agencies are more and more connected with the aerospace corporations like General Electric and Lockheed Martin. Nuclear research laboratories are involved in the development of space engines — the US Department of Energy, the warfare technologies corporations paid by NASA, the military elites, are all pushing for the introduction of nuclear power to space travel.

In a Pentagon report ('Visions for 2020' — another prophecy indeed) you can read the following statement: "Our first goal is to master the space dimension for military operations, in order to protect American interests".

Powerful masonic groups like the National Space Society and the Lunar Reclamation Society are lobbying government and manipulating public opinion for amendments to the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, in order to promote commercial and proprietary use of off-planetary lands, and to push for private corporate development of new aerospace technologies. Their motto is: 'First come, first served'.

You'd better ask yourself — where were you on July 21 1969?

After half a century of astrobollocks, only the Association of Autonomous Astronauts, an anti-hierarchical, transnational network, has destroyed the state and corporate monopoly of space travel. But the AAA has also raised the stakes. By fostering an independent, community-based space exploration, Autonomous Astronauts have also exposed the ideological lies of interplanetary capital. The AAA has a definite aim — to demolish the concept of 'space' that was invented in 1957.

Twenty-three years ago, the French theorist Jean Baudrillard demanded a "science-fiction that turns the system against itself... pushing things to their edge, where they naturally turn around and crash". The Association of Autonomous Astronauts is the realisation and suppression of this science-fiction.

Anything can happen outside the Earth, because there is nothing to determine what can and cannot take place.

We are happy when the Space Shuttle blows up.

Text by Gino Molinari, AAA Anzio

Distributed at the AAA Gathering in Rimini, March 27th 1999

In order to widen the scope of our attack against government and commercial space programmes, and to describe more fully the terrain that we are fighting on, the AAA has asserted that a desire to leave the planet by any means necessary must demand a confrontation with Zombie Culture.

Zombie Culture is an elaborate programme of mind invasion, a complex process of manipulation that aims at implanting specific forms of ideology into our minds, to ensure that we think and act accordingly. This process not only ensures that we are sufficiently diverted from pursuing liberatory projects, such as independent space exploration, but also drains us of our collective psychic energies in order to sustain the state, military and commercial monopoly of resources and control of space exploration technologies.

This is a survey of some AAA Exit Strategies currently in use.

COLLECTIVE PHANTOMS

A collective phantom is an identity that anyone can adopt, and which can operate within the wider context of popular culture. As a collective phantom, the AAA released itself onto the world on April 23rd 1995. The AAA has developed the collective phantom Exit Strategy in a specific direction, by forming itself as a network of groups that anyone can join, either by entering a local group or by forming their own AAA group. Individuals can adopt the collective identity of the AAA whilst also maintaining a specific identity within the network. This has emerged as an effective strategy against Zombie Culture's continuing efforts to reinforce global capitalism. The construction over the next few years by government space agencies of a so-called International Space Station, and all the attendant propaganda, is just one example of this effort. Autonomous Astronauts express their antagonism to Zombie Culture by revealing how the working class are prevented from building their own spaceships, by planting class war viruses within multiple imaginations, using the AAA as a collective phantom to carry out cultural sabotages and media invasions, whilst continuing to expand the AAA as a world-wide, transnational network.

MEDIA INVASIONS

This Exit Strategy refers to the invasion of Zombie Culture's media machines through direct attacks that are immediately digested by the media's voracious appetite for information. It is, therefore, a violation that infects the host from the inside. The AAA continues to make highly successful media invasions. British newspapers that have written about the AAA have included The Independent, The Telegraph and The Guardian. Articles about the AAA have also been featured in the glossy football magazine Goal and the sex magazine Forum. Numerous small press publications have also reviewed AAA activities. AAA representatives have also appeared on various television and radio programmes.

What is most striking about these media invasions is the AAA's ability to adapt its propaganda to each specific context, whilst still managing to communicate the essential ideas about community-based space travel. Because the AAA moves in several directions at once, Autonomous Astronauts can hold their own in various 'specialist' medias, talking about a variety of subjects including paganism, football, science, technology, art and politics. However, the idea that anyone can be an Autonomous Astronaut simply by getting involved challenges the media's role in maintaining the myth that only state, military or corporate interests are capable of organising successful space exploration programmes. The media invasion is a tactic for the dissemination of an idea in order to watch its effect.

The AAA has made available essential media invasion notes to assist those embarking on media invasion projects; these are important tips on how to deal with journalists, how to approach interview situations, and, most important of all, how to acquire the confidence to deal with the media in this way.

SPECULATIVE PLAYGROUNDS

A speculative playground is a space where people are able to experiment with concepts, investigate possibilities, and share and

collaborate on tracing new lines of flight. Here they kick ideas around, throwing them at each other to see what comes back. And as a playground, with the emphasis on the word play, there is an abandonment of competitive urges and the dissolution of egos — the pressure is off, people can afford to be embarrassed, to say things out loud, to go off on tangents, to make a mess or to babble away at themselves and others. At the same time there is some kind of structure to all this activity, however loose, a framework that enables a discussion about where to go next. But this structure is not hierarchical. A speculative playground is a conspiracy of equals, a haphazard grouping that can form new connections and traverse movements across fixed conceptions and old dogmas.

The AAA has evolved as a specific form of speculative playground that researches new possibilities for space exploration and new concepts of space. These investigations take place in the numerous AAA newsletters, journals, and electronic mailing lists, as well as by email and other forms of regular correspondence. The Dreamtime Phase to the AAA's Five Year Plan was a particularly important aspect to these speculations; the Dreamtime asked 'What is the point of going into space merely to replicate life on earth?' and encouraged inquiries about everyday life in space. These speculations still continue and will prove to be one of the AAA's most important legacies.

PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY

AAA psychogeographical excursions are an important opportunity for Autonomous Astronauts to get together. These trips help build morale and introduce new astronauts to the network. These events are also used to explore the 'psychogeographical resonance' of potential AAA launch sites and the historical connections that can be made. For example, an AAA trip to Royston, near Cambridge, revealed that the cave beneath the crossroads of Ermine Street and Icknield Way was probably used as a prototype launchpad/rocket by the Knights Templar.

Richard Essex (formerly of the London Psychogeographical Association) has described psychogeographical activity in the following way:

"By suspending the 'common sense' as we move from location to location in our daily life, we can rediscover the wilderness within the city. By exploring those areas we have no good reason to be in, we can discover the reasons we are constrained to certain areas.

"But this layer of psychogeographical activity soon reveals other layers. Questions of gender, of race, of access for people with disabilities soon arise. Any specific locality does not have a unique character. It is not just that a woman may relate differently to a place than a man, but that a woman's presence (or even the presence of a horde of women) can transform that place. Normality no longer functions as a global variable, it can only exist as the production of the functioning of a particular power at a particular place...

"Psychogeography...is a tool of class struggle. When kids from council estates wander into posh housing areas they are immediately harassed by the police...(The police) only accept conventional explanations in terms of economic activity. Psychogeography is always an uneconomic, even anti-economic, activity."

TRIOLECTICS

Triolectics is the conscious application of 'three body dynamics' to a specific discourse. For the AAA, the use of triolectical processes as an Exit Strategy has allowed the introduction of non-deterministic methods to the construction of spaceships, and shows how, at an organisational level, the AAA has embraced a conscious complexity. Mathematicians have long since realised that when three objects exist within an environment where they can all affect each other in some way, then the results of this cannot be predicted. Chaos theory has in part been developed from this. State-funded space agencies have yet to absorb the full implications of this uncertainty; indeed, the moment that they do realise that the universe is subject to intense and random proliferations that are beyond human cognition, these space agencies will conclude that the only course left open to them is to realise their own extinction by promptly handing over their resources to the AAA. Pure chance is as fundamental to space exploration as the desire to escape from gravity.

Phase Five THE FINAL PUSH

begins 23/04/99

The Association of Autonomous Astronauts move into the fifth and final phase of their Five Year Plan for establishing a world-wide network of local, community-based AAA groups dedicated to building their own spaceships.

On April 23rd 1999, on the fifth anniversary of the official launch of our independent space exploration programme, the Association of Autonomous Astronauts declares that the FINAL PUSH into the year 2000 has begun.

This final push begins with the results from our previous period of consolidation. We have confirmed that social interaction and a sense of humour is more important than the technical problems of constructing space ships. We have demonstrated that experimentation is a complete activity within itself. And we have eliminated any distinctions between inner and outer space, thereby enabling explorations of multiple spaces that connect with and affect each other.

This final push will confirm that there is no point going into space with the baggage that weighs us down on planet earth. We do not anticipate a clean break from this world — it is not a case of simply going somewhere else. The AAA's activities are prototypes for life in space; they exist as tendencies towards subversion, co-operation and joyful living.

This final push recognises that the most significant aspect of the impending Christian Millennium is the fact that the year 2000 marks the end game to the AAA's Five Year Plan. Whilst the state will use the Millennium as an opportunity to re-invigorate capitalist culture, the AAA's final push will build the necessary foundations for the future historicisation of independent and community-based space travel. Autonomous Astronauts will develop their own self-historification projects, and the emerging contradictions will ensure that the AAA will not be reduced to any single mythology.

SEE YOU IN SPACE!

[a s s o c i a t i o n o f a u t o n o m o u s a s t r o n a u t s]

space:1999



ten days that shook the universe

The days of this society are numbered. Its reasons and its merits have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; its inhabitants are divided into two parties, one of which wants to build their own spaceships and leave this society behind. 'Space 1999' explores the new possibilities that open up when we form autonomous communities in outer space.

The Association of Autonomous Astronauts (AAA) was launched on April 23rd 1995 as the world's first independent and community-based space programme. A Five Year Plan was also established for creating, by the year 2000, a world-wide network of local, community-based AAA groups dedicated to building their own spaceships. 'Space 1999' will form part of the AAA's FINAL PUSH, and will bring together Autonomous Astronauts from around the world to present various activities, including media invasions, recruitment drives and propaganda efforts. This ten day festival will also expose local communities in London to the possibilities of independent space exploration.

Moving in several directions at once, the AAA has declared:
'Only those who attempt the impossible will achieve the absurd'.

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Donations to our space program are gratefully received.

There is a great field of people around the AAA who are somehow ready for space travel but who aren't trying to do it. People project their hopes on the AAA or write a letter asking how they can join. It isn't like that; it's about forming a group yourself.